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13 Extreme Kids' Playhouses

Browse brilliant personal mini-homes built specifically for child's play

By [Brynn Mannino](#) Posted December 07, 2009 from [WomansDay.com](#)

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Long gone are the days of sheet-and-pillow forts. Today's kids have much more modern hideaways. Here, check out the most awe-inspiring models—some that cost thousands of dollars and boast fancy features like leatherette-finished bunks and built-in TV/DVD players. These pint-sized dwellings put a whole new spin on what it means to "play house."

Connecticut Castle



Designer Barbara Butler built this 32' x 44' x 16' wooden castle in 1999 for two boys to complement their parents' 1910 English-style country [home](#) in Litchfield, Connecticut. *Photo courtesy of [Barbara Butler](#).*

Malibu Lighthouse



Also built by Butler in 2001, this Pacific Ocean overlook and play fort in Malibu was inspired by images of lighthouse, sea waves and driftwood. *Photo courtesy of [Barbara Butler](#).*

Fort Mediterranean



This 51'-long Butler-built playhouse—assembled in 2007 in Silicon Valley—summons a Mediterranean-inspired charm with its color palette and many bridges and hideaways. *Photo courtesy of [Barbara Butler](#).*

Canyon Perch



Perched atop a 9'-tall stump, this tree fort—built in 2003, also by Butler—sits in a deep ravine, and offers kids a Swinging Bridge, a Look-Out Deck, a Trap Door, a Catwalk, a Rock Climbing Tower and more.

Photo courtesy of [Barbara Butler](#).

Americana Del Mar



Built in 2008 by Bill Mitchell and his University of California team, Irvine Facilities Management (who also did the interior design), this 10' x 8' playhouse mimics coastal cottages in Corona del Mar, California, and has a kitchen, a loft, and a flatscreen [DVD player](#). *Photo courtesy of David Heath of [Western Exposure](#) and [Project Playhouse](#).*

Train Play Station



Built in 2001 in Heber City, Utah, by Devrle Wells, who's the former owner of WoodManor Playhouses, this little red residence is the perfect escape for any young kid who loves locomotives. *Photo courtesy of [WoodManor Playhouses](#).*

Thoroughly Modern Manor



Designed by Bloomfield Hills, Michigan–based AZD Associates Architects, this 10' x 10' castle—featuring a curved metal roof, electric heat, built-in TV/DVD and creativity station—is a far cry from the sheet-shantied shacks of yesteryear; it was auctioned off for \$30,000. *Photo courtesy of [AZD Associates Architects](#).*

Pirate's Playhouse



This Pirate-themed playhouse—from which protrudes an 8' x 6' galleon-style pirate bow—was available at Costco in 2006 for \$18,499.99. Also included: An oversize log (of which no two were the same), swing, fireman's pole and ship's wheel. *Photo courtesy of DisneyFrontier.com.*

Redneck Retreat



This truck-crossed tree house—featuring a Victorian-style clubhouse and truck-bed balcony—allows kids a place to relax and, better yet, experience stationary adventures in the driver's seat of the playhouse's orange truck. *Photo courtesy of Daniels Wood Land, Inc.*

St. James Castle



This pretty-in-pink princess castle, whose morphed features conjure up thoughts of a carnival funhouse, is made of redwood log and includes a drawbridge, a turbo spiral slide, faux rock accents, a redwood dragon carving and more—all perfect for summoning any prince for a playdate. *Photo courtesy of [Daniels Wood Land, Inc.](#)*

Red Beard's Revenge Pirate Ship House



Constructed of mahogany and steam-curved poplar planks, this 12' x 18' playhouse—which boasts leatherette-cushioned sleeping bunks, a waterproof roof, cannonball-riddled mast and rigging, and upper and lower decks constructed from Douglas fir—goes for a whopping \$52,000 (to the luckiest kid in the room). *Photo courtesy of [PoshTots.com](#).*

Habitable Polyhedron




Designed by Manuel Villa, this nature-surrounded dwelling—built in a family’s garden in Bogota, Colombia—is meant to embrace both children and adults alike while acting as an independent space from day-to-day activities. *Photo courtesy of Inhabitots.com.*

qb Playhouse



qb playhouses—currently only sold in Europe—are fully customizable. Kids can pick the color and print which will decorate the front of the sustainable wood-harvested frame and/or upload a print of their choice to the qb website. Though expensive (€619–€749), proceeds are donated to Right to Play—a humanitarian organization that uses sport and play as a tool for the development of children. *Photo courtesy of quubi.nl/.*

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